

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2016



SHORT NOTES

Resolution: Success!

This year, have your child make resolutions that will motivate him to do his best in school. For instance, he could pick a subject to improve in or a challenging book series to read. Encourage him to draw a picture of himself meeting his goal and share the drawing with his teacher.

Hands-on history

Let your youngster take white paper and an unwrapped crayon on a walk around town. She can place the paper over engravings on historical markers or plaques and rub lightly with the side of the crayon. At home, suggest that she write a caption for each rubbing to tell a “local history” story.

Sick time

When your child is sick, notify the school as soon as possible that he will be absent. Then, follow school policy about how long he must be symptom-free before he may return to class. *Note:* He could ask a sibling or friend to bring home his work. Or when he goes back, he can talk to his teacher about making up the work.

Worth quoting

“Every time you tear a leaf off a calendar, you present a new place for new ideas and progress.” *Charles Kettering*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Can you name three consecutive days without saying *Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday*?

A: Yes! Yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



The three Cs of group work

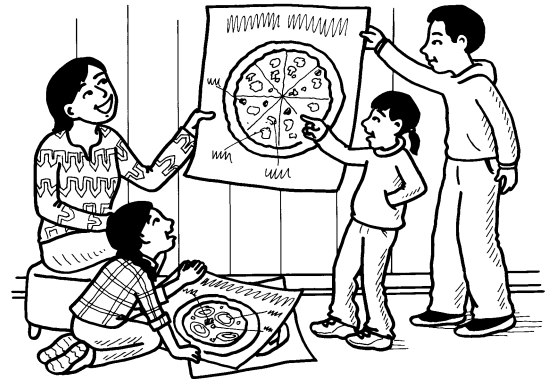
Three kindergartners work together on a mural in art class. Several fifth graders discuss a novel they read in reading group. No matter how old your child is, being able to communicate, collaborate, and compromise is important when she works with others. Consider these ways to practice at home.

Communication

Group members communicate better when one person speaks at a time. Let your youngster create a “talking stick” by covering a ruler with aluminum foil or decorating a paper towel tube. During a family discussion, pass the stick around—only the person holding it may speak. This will remind your child to wait her turn and listen to what others say.

Collaboration

Show your youngster that when people combine ideas, they often come up with new or better ones. Pretend you’re a restaurant marketing team in charge of designing a pizza or burger. Start by looking at menus for interesting twists (barbecue pizza, burger with fried egg), and create something differ-



ent (blue cheese pizza, Caesar burger). Then, work together to make your new menu item for dinner.

Compromise

When group members disagree on a topic for their presentation or on who will take what role, it’s important to compromise. That means stating what you would prefer—and what alternatives you’re willing to accept. Your child can try this at home when your family makes a decision. For example, maybe one sibling wants to go sledding while another would prefer ice skating. They could agree to sled first—but the one who wanted to ice skate gets to choose the hill they’ll sled on. ♥

Keep track of progress

By staying on top of how your youngster does in school, you can support his achievements and nip any problems in the bud. Try these strategies.

- **Go over papers.** Look at each graded assignment your child brings home. This is an easy way to see what he’s doing well and what he needs to work on.
- **Use electronic tools.** If the school posts grades online, check them regularly.
- **Communicate with the teacher.** Contact her if your youngster says a subject is difficult or brings home low grades. You could ask about ways to help him. ♥

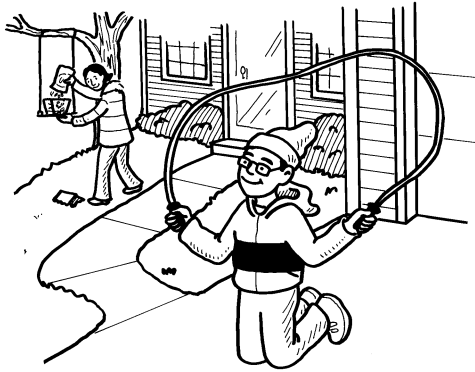


Behavior “mysteries”

Is your youngster's behavior sometimes baffling? Here are solutions to common scenarios parents face.

My child behaves in school but acts out at home. Your youngster probably feels more relaxed at home and can let his guard down more with you. Rest assured this is normal. Remind him of the consequences for misbehaving at home, and follow through when he acts out. (And be glad that your child behaves at school!)

After school, my youngster doesn't want to talk about his day or start homework. Your child may be



struggling to switch out of “school mode.” Try giving him a break first—he may appreciate a few minutes to unwind, just as some adults do after work. Suggest a snack and exercise, such as riding his bike or jumping rope.

My child only obeys me when I raise my voice. If

your youngster knows he has to do what you ask only when you shout, he'll probably wait for your raised voice before he listens. Tell him that you'll ask nicely once, and after that, there will be a consequence for not listening.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Experiment with evergreens

Your child may wonder why some trees stay green throughout the year (*evergreens*) and others lose their leaves (*deciduous*). With this activity, she can find out.

Let your youngster cut out two green construction-paper “leaves” and sprinkle them lightly with water. She should wrap one in waxed paper and lay both leaves in the sun for at least two hours. What happens? (The bare leaf stays dry, but the protected one remains moist.)



The science: A deciduous tree loses water through its leaves' tiny pores, so it gets rid of the leaves to conserve water in harsh weather. But evergreen leaves have a waxy *cuticle*, or covering, kind of like the waxed paper that protected your child's paper leaf. This coating keeps the water from evaporating, so leaves can remain on the tree through the winter.♥

Q & A

Spell-check pitfalls

Q: My daughter says spelling is no big deal because we have spell-check and autocorrect.

How can I convince her that spelling still matters?

A: Spell-check and autocorrect are handy tools. But they're not foolproof, and they're not always available.

When your child writes a school report, sit with her while she runs spell-check. Together, look for examples of mistakes caused by relying on the computer. This often happens with homophones (*it's* and *its*, *you're* and *your*), for instance. She'll need to know the difference to use the correct word.

Also, help her think of situations where she won't have spell-check or autocorrect, such as taking a test or using special software that doesn't include the feature. And if she can't spell a word, she may not recognize it when she reads, which can interfere with her comprehension.

Finally, point out that if she studies her spelling words, thinks carefully about how words are spelled, and proofreads her work, she'll find that the best spell-check is in her own head!♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Helpful strategies for ADHD

My fourth-grader, Ryan, has ADHD, and he often loses books and papers and forgets to turn in assignments or to bring home slips for me to sign.

I talked to a fellow PTA parent whose oldest son has ADHD. She said her son puts sticky-note reminders everywhere—on his desk and binders and beside the front door. He also does better in school if he gets 11 hours

of sleep, about two hours more than his siblings need.

I got colorful pads of sticky notes for Ryan, and he came up with a system for color-coding his reminders. Also, we are moving up his bedtime by a few minutes each night until we notice a difference. I know Ryan

will still forget things from time to time, but it's helpful to know that we have strategies to try.♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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